



# Missouri Department of Natural Resources

## MISSOURI SOIL AND WATER DISTRICTS COMMISSION

### TAN-TAR-A RESORT

#### Parasol I/II

#### Osage Beach, Missouri

November 29, 2004

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:** John Aylward, Elizabeth Brown, Larry Furbeck, Leon Kreisler, and Philip Luebbering

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS:** DEAN THOMAS PAYNE, UNIV. OF MISSOURI: David Baker; JOHN HOSKINS, DEPT. OF CONSERVATION: Brad McCord; PETER HOFHERR, DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE: Judy Grundler; STEPHEN MAHFOOD, DEPT OF NATURAL RESOURCES: Scott Totten

**ADVISORY MEMBERS PRESENT: SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM:** Sarah Fast; NRCS: Roger Hansen; MASWCD: Steve Oetting

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:** Niki Aberle, Davin Althoff, Gary Baclesse, Milt Barr, Jim Boschert, April Brandt, Chris Evans, Noland Farmer, John Forsyth, Rose Marie Hopkins, Gina Luebbering, Joyce Luebbering, Dean Martin, Theresa Mueller, Marcy Oerly, James Plassmeyer, Josh Poynor, Jeremy Redden, Ron Redden, Kevin Scherr, Judy Stinson, Ken Struempf, Chris Wieberg, Bill Wilson

**OTHERS PRESENT: DISTRICTS:** BATES: Brad Powell, Joyce Rider-Diehl; BENTON: Pam Bisby, Jim Freeburger, Jamie Henderson, Tina Hovendick; BUCHANAN: Donald Jordon; BUTLER: Bruce Beck, Terry Frazier, Irvin Mansbridge, Bruce Yarbrow; CAMDEN: Erine Calvert; CASS: Earlene Davis, Janice Fogle, Nathan Kirchhoff, Mike Moreland, Kevin Reed; CLARK: Henry Heinze; DAVIESS: Tom Lambert; DENT: Bud Shaw; DOUGLAS: Eli Mast; FRANKLIN: Laura McKeever; GREENE: Deneen Jenkins; JACKSON: Bill Bohnert; HOWARD: Beverly Dometroroch; MADISON: Harry Robbins; MARIES: Sandy Hutchison; MILLER: Dan Greeson, Elias Otto, James Schulte, Lisa Tellman; MONTGOMERY: Bob Ridgley, Brenda VanBooven Ann Whitehead; PEMISCOTT: Carol Barnes; RAY: Stephanie Ross; RIPLEY: Rachel Griffin; SHANNON: David Dix; STODDARD: Jim Stuever; VERNON: Fred Feldmann; WARREN: Wilmer Erfling, Deb Niederer; WRIGHT: Dan Divine, Steve Freeman, JD Hutsell, Connie Krider, Bill Pyatt, Missy Wollard; **STATE OF MISSOURI:** ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE: Harry Bozoian, Zora Mulligan; **OTHERS:** MASWCD: Kathryn Braden, Peggy Lemons, MLICA: Eddie Gilmore; NRCS: Diane Brady, Gorman Bennett, Jack Lewis, Michael Morris, Adam Reed; UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI: Steve Jeanetta, Clark Gantzer; **INDIVIDUALS:** Carol Frazier,

**JOINT MEETING  
MISSOURI ASSOCIATION OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION  
DISTRICTS  
AND  
MISSOURI SOIL AND WATER DISTRICTS COMMISSION**

**A. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Elizabeth Brown and Steve Oetting opened the meeting at 8:01 AM by welcoming everyone. Introductions of the Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Area Directors and the members of the Missouri Soil and Water Districts Commission followed the welcome.

**B. FY2004/FY2005 BUDGET REVIEW**

Milt Barr presented a review of the first quarter of fiscal year (FY) 2005 revenue and expense summaries, and an update on the estimated budget planning changes for FY06. Mr. Barr provided a quick review of the Sales Tax Revenue Cycle, stating that 1/10 of 1 percent of the General Sales and Use Tax is split evenly between State Parks and the Soil and Water Conservation Program. The Department of Revenue collects the revenues and deposits them on a daily basis into the program fund. The deposits usually reflect the previous 30 or more days' activities depending on what point in the quarter for business collection and reporting.

In the first quarter, there was a 4.40 percent sales tax revenue deposit increase over the first quarter last year of \$416,346. In comparing FY04 and FY05, the consumer spending cycles were basically the same for both years, with somewhat stronger sales for FY05. Mr. Barr reminded the two bodies that the department's-planning rate for 2005 and 2006 used an increase of 4.5 percent for the Parks and Soils Tax for FY05 and the first quarter rate of change was very close to that at 4.4 percent. In reviewing and comparing first quarter expenditures, there was a 14.7 percent increase for FY05 compared to FY04. The first quarter of FY05, expenditures were \$6,110,411; in FY04, first quarter expenditures were \$5,347,709. FY04 first quarter expenditures were unusually low due to requests for payments being received later and processed in the second quarter. FY05 information shows that the claims were submitted in a more timely manner and the processing was able to be completed in the first quarter.

Mr. Barr stated that the FY05 budget, revenues, and expenditure figures were within acceptable limits and appeared to be on track for another successful year.

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The total approved budget for the current fiscal year is \$38,545,565. This amount included a small pay increase for personnel services over FY04. Mr. Barr also reviewed the changes for FY05 in that the programs do not use re-appropriation authority to manage multi-year projects and activities any more. The programs with multi-year activities now have annual "estimated authority" to be able to continue to fund amounts for current year and multi-year activities in the annual budget. Current projections for FY05 indicated that the research program would be the only program, so far, that would appear to need the estimate authority increase with other programs projected within their annual appropriated authority. The budget for FY06 was submitted and approved by the department with an increase for district employee benefits for district grants of \$241,043, as previously approved by the commission. A small increase in personal services of approximately \$9,500 for support services now at the Elm Street building will be reallocated back to the program after the program moves to the new Lewis and Clark Building where it will no longer be needed.

### **C. STATE AUDIT REPORT FOLLOW-UP**

Milt Barr presented a follow-up pertaining to the State Auditor's report for the Department of Natural Resources and the Soil and Water Conservation Program. The commission was last presented a briefing in January 2004 showing five of the ten audit recommendations that had been implemented. This update is able to now show eight of the ten recommendations that are being implemented and that the remaining two recommendations are not planned for implementation. The commission had handouts to show the specific details of the recommendations to review at their leisure.

The state audit report primarily focused on accounting transactions for FY00, FY01, and FY02. The actual audit process occurred over a 2½-year period. Because of the length of time, some of the recommendations had been identified and changes implemented before the end of the audit.

In Section 3 of the audit report, the auditor made four recommendations. The first recommendation was that the commission should conduct a more detailed study to quantify objective costs or goals for how to use the soil sales tax, and to consider more conservation practices for all districts. The second recommendation was to reevaluate how administrative district grant funds are being allocated and determine the most cost-effective method. The third recommendation was to establish procedures to ensure documented reviews of cell phone use. The last recommendation made was to review travel expenditures for future out-of-town meetings to determine the most cost-effective options to meet program needs. All but the second recommendation have been implemented as the commission reviews the district grant allocation formulas annually and believes that it is still the best practice to use.

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In Section 4 of the audit report, the auditor made three recommendations. The first was to ensure soil and water conservation (SWCD) board minutes are obtained and reviewed for compliance; ensure all commission and district minutes and notes are properly approved; and ensure SWCD regular meeting minutes document reason(s) for going into closed session. The second recommendation was to ensure all annual audits of the SWCDs are conducted and follow-up actions taken. The last recommendation was to ensure the DNR Internal Audit Section performs an audit of the internal controls of the SWCP. These three recommendations have been implemented with the specific details as shown in the handouts to the commission.

In Section 5, there were three recommendations made by the auditor. The first being to require canceled checks to ensure costs are accurate along with require itemized invoices with dates of actual payment, as well as ensure claim filed contain copies of all the documents; and ensure denied claim review and approval procedures are followed. The second recommendation was to discontinue use of the signature stamp for administrative review and approval of claims. The last recommendation was to ensure SWCDs dispose of equipment purchased with state funds in accordance with program policies and procedures. Two of the three recommendations in this section were implemented with the details in the handouts to the commission. The second recommendation was reviewed thoroughly and a determination was made that the program would continue the use of the administrative signature stamp. The stamp was not being used for approvals of claims but to annotate a completed administrative review. The stamp would continue to be used at the direction and control of the staff director.

In summary, of the ten areas with recommendations by the auditor, eight areas have had actions taken to implement the recommendations and the two areas discussed, district funding formulas and administrative signature stamp will continue without further change action.

Mr. Barr indicated the audit was lengthy and thorough, but the overall audit report showed no surprises or significant issues.

### **D. FY2004 REPORTS**

#### **1. Cost-Share Program – FY04-05 Overview**

Ron Redden presented a report of an overview of the Cost-Share Program for FY04 and briefed on FY05. For FY04, the commission allocated \$23,300,000 to the districts. The districts obligated \$20,700,000 and claimed \$19,600,000, which was approximately 84 percent of the funds that were made available.

Expenditures for FY04 ranged from 35.5 percent for terraces, 32 percent for water impoundment reservoirs, 7.5 percent for planned grazing systems, 8 percent for

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sediment retention basins, 6 percent for sod waterways, and 9 percent for permanent vegetative cover improvement. In comparing FY03 to FY04, the significant change was less of the money spent on terraces and more on water impoundment reservoirs. This meant less money was spent to address sheet and rill erosion. There was an approximate 4 percent change in the amount of money spent on terraces from FY03 to FY04.

In FY04 there were 77 districts that obligated 80 percent or more of their allocated money to landowners. There were 65 districts that claimed 80 percent or more of their allocation.

In FY05 there is no longer the use of reappropriated money; these funds will go back into the fund. For FY05, there will be a need to allow districts to claim as close to 100 percent of the \$20,250,000. Mr. Redden stated that over the last five years, districts have averaged claiming 84 percent of their money each year that was available to them. For FY05, there was an appropriation of \$20,250,000. In May, the commission allocated \$19,900,000 to the districts as their initial allocation. In September, there was an additional allocation of \$4,100,000 to the 65 districts that claimed at least 80 percent of their funds in FY04. Each of these districts were offered \$68,500. All but five districts accepted the full amount. By adding the additional \$4,100,000, the total for FY05 is \$24,000,000 to the districts. Again, if they claim about 84 percent of the \$24,000,000, they will be close to claiming the full \$20,250,000 appropriation.

### **2. FY04 Loan Interest-Share Overview**

Marcy Oerly presented the FY04 Annual Report for the Loan Interest-Share Program.

The purpose of the Loan Interest-Share Program is to promote the use of management practices and conservation equipment that helps prevent or control soil erosion. The program provides an interest-refund of a portion of the interest on a conventional loan obtained for eligible erosion control or prevention practices, and equipment that is included in the conservation plan.

Some of the practices and equipment that are eligible are; all standard erosion control and prevention practices, new or used no-till drills and planters, earthmoving scrapers, subsoilers, and animal waste systems.

There were 366 payments processed in FY04, for a total of \$123,000 in landowner's interest payments. Of these, 39 percent was for no-till drills, 59 percent was for no-till planters, and 2 percent was for all other eligible items. The

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“Other” category included scrapers, ridge-till cultivators and planters, subsoilers, lagoon and deep pit agitation equipment, the attachments necessary to make conventional planting equipment capable of no-till or ridge till, and all standard conservation practices.

There are 62 participating districts leaving 52 districts that have no active loans. The majority of the districts that do not have active loans are located in the southern part of the state. The reason that participation may be low in this area is due to the practices used most, such as grass seedings, planned grazing systems, and water impoundment reservoirs. These practices can be cost-shared through the state’s Cost-Share Program, or United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). Since landowners cannot participate in both programs, they choose to use the Cost-Share Program because it offers more return on their money.

The program payments ranged from a low of \$57,377 in 1987, to a high of \$479,688 in 1992. In FY04, the total for payments was \$123,344. The decrease was most likely due to the economy and low interest rates received on invested state funds. Interest rates have ranged from 7.5 percent in 1990 to 1.9 percent in 2004. Low interest rates have affected the expenditures in the Loan Interest-Share Program. The decrease may also be due to the fact that landowners cannot participate in the program twice for the same type of practice or piece of equipment. It is possible that the program is saturated with landowners that have reached their participation limitations. Another reason could be that equipment dealers are offering attractive financing incentives. The \$300,000 appropriation for the program was viewed as being adequate to cover current obligations. Currently, there have been 45 payments processed in FY04 for a total of \$13,000 in reimbursements to landowners.

### **3. SALT**

Ken Struempf presented a report on the Agricultural Nonpoint Source (AgNPS) Special Area Land Treatment (SALT) Program. The purpose of the AgNPS SALT Program is to provide grants to soil and water districts to address agriculture nonpoint source pollution on a watershed basis.

There were a total of 57 approved watersheds and seven of them have been completed. Of the seven that were completed, those are seven of 12 that the commission approved in 1997 as pilots. In FY04, \$5,100,000 was spent in the SALT Program. Of that amount, 67 percent or approximately \$3,400,000 was for cost-share, 25 percent or approximately \$1,200,000 for personnel, and 8 percent for other. Of that 8 percent, 1 percent or approximately \$50,000 was for

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office/technical, 1 percent or approximately \$58,000 for information/education, 4 percent or approximately \$185,000 for field equipment, 1 percent or approximately \$35,000 for planning grants, and 1 percent or approximately \$42,000 for Missouri Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (MoCREP).

For AgNPS SALT Cost-Share for FY04, the total was \$3,423,103.05. The largest amount of money was spent on erosion control, and pasture and hayland for a total of 56 percent of the total. The other 44 percent was spent on new practices available only in SALT watersheds.

In the seventh call for AgNPS SALT applications, 23 districts expressed interest in applying. The commission has available approximately \$5,000,000 to approve projects. The average project costs \$750,000 that will allow the commission to approve seven to eight projects for the last call.

#### **4. FY04 District Financial and Staffing Summary**

Jim Plassmeyer presented a report on the FY04 district financial reports. The information used came from the districts' year-end financial reports that were submitted to the program office.

The 114 districts reported for FY04 a total income of \$11,991,941, which was the fourth year in a row that the districts exceeded \$10,000,000 in their total income. The average, per district, is just over \$105,192 and the maximum that a district reported was \$281,862 and the minimum was \$33,680.

The majority of the districts' local funds come from machine rental and sales income. Machine rental has fluctuated over the past few years and sales have continued to decrease until FY04 when there was an increase. In FY04, machine rental increased by \$60,013 or 6 percent and sales income increase by \$95,805 or 26 percent. It was noted that interest earned decreased in FY04, while donations and county commission funds remained about the same.

Just over \$9,000,000 out of the \$11,962,210 in total expenses for FY04 was for employee-related costs. Of the \$9,010,807 for employee expenses, 76 percent goes toward gross salaries and 24 percent goes toward other employee expenses. This includes health insurance, retirement, the district's portion of taxes, workers' compensation, unemployment, travel, and training. For the past year, total income increased by \$379,948, while total expenses increased by \$685,510. Since FY94, income has increased by 46 percent and the expenses by 52 percent. In FY02, expenses exceeded income for the first time and in FY03, income exceeded expenses. It was noted that in FY04, income exceeded expenses by

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only \$29,731. For FY04, there were 51 districts that had more expenses than income and 63 had more income than expenses.

In FY04, 38 districts had 90 percent or more of their funds derived from the state and three districts had 49 percent or less of their funding derived from state funds. There were nine districts that had over \$100,000 left in their accounts at the end of FY04, and 14 districts had less than \$9,999. The average carryover per district was \$44,647, which is \$1,506 more per district than in FY03. Over the past years, the average amount of carryover has increased from \$26,958 to \$39,569 in FY01 and dropped in FY02 to \$39,210, and was back up to \$43,667 in FY03 and continues to increase.

Next, Jim Boschert presented a report on the number of district employees and their salaries. The information was taken from the employee summaries and the benefit agreements.

For FY05, employee benefit agreements showed there are 320 total district employees. Of these, only 17 were reported to be part-time employees. This number will be higher as turnover occurs in the districts this fiscal year.

Salaries since FY01 have steadily increased. From FY01 to FY02, the increase was 13 percent; from FY02 to FY03, the increase was 10 percent; and from FY03 to FY04, the increase was 2 percent. It is estimated that there will be a 2 percent increase from FY04 to FY05 also. The salaries for the current year are estimated to be \$6,780,510.

According to information for a full-time employee that works 2080 hours, the salary for a district clerk in Area 6 had the largest increase of 32 percent from FY99 to FY05. They also pay the most for a district clerk at an average of \$24,574. Area 7 reported a decrease of 4 percent in the salary for a district clerk at \$16,570. For a district manager, the largest increase was in Area 7 with a 44 percent increase. The district manager's average salary was \$24,924. The lowest increase was reported in Area 8 with a 9 percent increase. For a district technician, the largest increases were from Areas 2 and 6 with a 41 percent increase. In Area 2 the average salary for a district technician was reported to be \$25,932 and in Area 6 the average was \$25,278. The lowest increase was reported in Area 8 with a 7 percent increase.

In the benefit grant for FY04, the districts claimed \$317,691 for retirement benefits and \$785,961 for health insurance expenses. In FY04, there were 313 district employees that claimed retirement expenses for an average of \$1,015 per



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employee and the average for the 264 employees that claimed health insurance expenses was \$2,977 per employee.

### **E. Preview of Strategic Planning Workshop(s)**

#### **1. Update on Process to Date – Steve Jeanetta UMC**

Steve Jeanetta presented an update on where the planning process was. Mr. Jeanetta stated that the priorities from the area meetings would be available to be viewed for all the areas during the Training Conference. Each area's priorities would be displayed along with complete summaries for the areas. This would be available for the areas to compare what they saw as priorities to other areas.

Mr. Jeanetta provided a condensed copy of the priorities of the eight areas to the table. These priorities will be used to create the priority for the state. This information will be worked on further during the conference. The themes that came out of the area meetings were education, soil conservation, changing landuse, water issues, and organizational development.

At the workshops, a survey will be provided for issues that are important that came from the Area Meetings. During the workshop, the questions that will be covered are: of the priorities identified; what are the three most important to include in the plan; what is missing, and how will the information be used to renew the tax. In January or February, a summary will be completed that incorporates the information received during the conference and what has already been done.

### **F. Overview of training conference**

Bill Wilson presented an overview of the training conference. The theme for the conference was "The Road to Conservation." There were 23 different workshops for the conference. Mr. Wilson briefly discussed one workshop entitled "Planning for the Future Continues". This workshop will review the work completed by all the districts at each of the eight area meetings in August. Mr. Stephen Jeanetta will then discuss how all this information will be used by the Commission to develop a statewide plan. Mr. Wilson also went over the agenda for each day of the conference.

Steve Oetting stated that everyone present was familiar with the soil side of the tax, but it would be a benefit to visit with some of the park's people so as to understand better what their role is, since it is a joint tax. Mr. Oetting stated he thought there was a tendency to think that the Soil and Parks Tax was here to stay because it has been available for quite awhile. One of the things that he had the opportunity to do was to attend some NACD functions where he found out that some of the neighboring states struggle to have district employees in their offices.

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Roger Hansen stated that MASWCD had applied for additional funds for a district development grant in the summer, and Mr. Hansen signed it and it was on the way to Steve Oetting in the amount of \$20,000.

Elizabeth Brown stated that she agreed with Steve Oetting in thinking very seriously about the renewal of the Parks and Soils Sales Tax. In Ms. Brown's area, she is familiar with Arrow Rock State Park that is used by families, teams, and campers, so the park side is very important.

### **MISSOURI SOIL AND WATER DISTRICTS COMMISSION MEETING**

#### **A. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Elizabeth Brown called the meeting to order at Tan-Tar-A Resort in Osage Beach, Missouri, in the Parasol I/II Meeting Room at 9:34 AM.

#### **B. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

Larry Furbeck made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 4, 2004 commission meeting as mailed. Philip Luebbering seconded the motion. When asked by the chair, John Aylward, Larry Furbeck, Leon Kreisler, Philip Luebbering, and Elizabeth Brown voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

#### **C. APPEALS**

##### **1. District Assistance Section**

##### **a. Cass SWCD – Technical Tools Purchased from the Administrative Expenses Grant**

Jim Boschert presented an appeal from the Cass County SWCD asking the commission to allow the district to purchase tools from the administrative expense grant. These expenses were previously denied following commission policy.

In the letter from the district, the district stated that they wanted to purchase some tools for maintenance and upkeep of district operations. Because they did not want any errors regarding the purchase, they contacted Sarah Popp, who was their coordinator, to discuss the purchase. They believed that the program office was contacted and it was alright to

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purchase the tools as long as they were being used for the operation of district business.

When the quarterly report was submitted to the program office, the district was informed that the tools were not eligible from the administrative expenses grant and would have to be moved to the districts local fund. The district felt they acted in good faith by contacting the program office and wanted the expense reinstated to the districts administrative expenses grant.

Mr. Boschert pointed out that the discussion and denial of the expense took place before Ms. Popp resigned from the program. Ms. Popp stated she did not remember the district contacting her about the purchase of tools for repairing equipment and Mr. Boschert stated he did not remember Ms. Popp talking to him about the expense. Mr. Boschert stated that Ms. Popp did remember Cass County talking to her about the purchase of a Global Positioning System (GPS). It was noted that in the district's May minutes, there was no mention of the item being discussed with program staff.

The copy of the commission policy was provided to the commission. Mr. Boschert stated that staff has interpreted the policy to mean all expenses related to revenue-generating equipment, might be taken from the revenue generated by the equipment. He pointed out those expenses that had been denied in the past-included tools, storage shed, insurance, and others.

In the first quarter of last fiscal year, the program office staff denied an expense from Cass County that was related to revenue generating equipment.

Mike Moreland from Cass County stated this was a gray area to them, and that was why they sought guidance from the program office. They knew the tools themselves would not be an income-generating item, but the equipment they were going to use the tools on, was. Mr. Moreland stated the district clerk contacted Ms. Popp and the information they received back was that it was OK. It was pointed out that nothing was in writing; all the information was verbal. At the next board meeting, they voted to purchase the tools but when the quarterly report was submitted, the tools were denied. Mr. Moreland stated they felt they had acted in good faith by contacting the program office.

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When asked about the GPS, Mr. Moreland stated that was discussed after the tools. When asked if the district had any minutes regarding the issues, Mr. Moreland indicated the minutes did not state when they discussed the tools. They asked if Ms. Popp authorized the purchase, Sarah Fast stated that Ms. Popp was a new coordinator and no longer with the program, but when asked about this, Ms. Popp stated she did not remember approving the purchase. Ms. Fast reiterated that Ms. Popp did not think she told them it was approved, although the district stated they thought they were approved.

Philip Luebbering made a motion to allow the expense from the administrative expense grant. John Aylward seconded the motion. When asked by the chair, John Aylward, Larry Furbeck, Leon Kreisler, Philip Luebbering, and Elizabeth Brown voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

### **D. REVIEW/EVALUATION**

#### **1. Land Assistance**

##### **a. Cost-Share**

##### **1. Monthly Cost-Share Usage Report**

Noland Farmer reported that districts were allocated approximately \$24,000,000 for use during FY05. This amount included an additional allocation that was made available. It was projected that the districts would only claim \$20,000,000 of the allocation. This projection was based on trends of previous years in relation to the total allocation made available to the districts.

Mr. Farmer stated that as of October 31<sup>st</sup>, \$2,600,000 in claims had been processed which was \$400,000 short of what was projected. As of November 24<sup>th</sup>, \$3,800,000 in claims had been received compared to the \$4,500,000 that was projected. Last year at this time, \$4,400,000 had been received in claims.

##### **2. FY04 Regular Cost-Share Evaluation Report**

Noland Farmer reported on regular cost-share for fiscal year 2004. In FY04, districts were allocated \$23,400,000 for regular cost-share. There were 5,875 claims in FY04; the average cost per practice was \$3,339.02. In FY03, there were 6,525 claims; the average cost per practice was \$3,173.43.

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There was a total of 3,400,000 tons of soil saved in FY03 and in FY04 there was a total of 3,000,000 tons of soil saved. The cost of a ton of soil saved in FY03 was \$6.10 compared to \$6.64 in FY04. These costs are per ton of cost-share dollars paid to the landowner rather than the actual cost incurred by the landowner to install the practice

In FY03, funds were spent on 105,000 acres of agricultural land as compared to 100,000 acres in FY04. This was a decrease of 5 percent.

Some of the practices completed in FY04 were: Tile Terraces (1,042), Earthwork Only Terraces (265), Water Impoundment Structures (1,126), Sediment Retention, Erosion or Water Control Structures (945), and Permanent Vegetative Cover Establishment (727).

In FY04, all the numbers decreased with the exception of Planned Grazing Systems with Pond (DSP-33), which remained the same, Planned Grazing Systems (DSP-3) up 24 percent, No-Till (DSL-15) up 6 percent, Sediment Retention, Erosion, or Water Control Structure (DWP-1) up 12 percent, and Water Impoundment Reservoirs (DWC-1) up 5 percent. The most significant difference between practices claimed in FY04 and FY03 seemed to be in the number of terrace systems installed. The total number of all practices went down 10 percent, but the combined number of terrace systems installed went down by 22 percent. In FY03, there were 1,679 terraces systems installed compared to 1,307 in FY04.

Terraces and Water Impoundment Reservoirs were the two practices that used the most cost-share dollars with 35.5 percent and 32 percent, respectively.

The cost per ton of soil saved has steadily increased over the past five years. In FY00, the cost was \$4.85 and in FY04, the average cost was \$6.64. In FY03, there was a 9 percent increase in the cost per ton of soil saved. From FY02 to FY03, there was an increase of 12 percent in the cost per ton. The increase in the costs between fiscal years can be attributed to a number of reasons. Some are that over the past few years some of the soils that were experiencing higher soil loss have been treated, the county average costs for components have been updated, and some districts

removed or reduced practice limits in order to qualify for additional allocations.

**3. Approved Practice List for FY05**

Ron Redden presented a list for approval of eligible practices. The commission is required by regulation each year to affirm or modify the list of eligible practices available to the districts. The last time this was done was at the November 2003 meeting.

Mr. Redden provided the commission with the list of practices that are currently offered. The commission has sometimes in the past removed practices that were not being used. Other times, the commission has left them on the list because they are good conservation practices, even though not often used.

In FY01, the commission chose to remove the following practices: Strip-Cropping, Contour Farming, and Windbreaks for certain eligible districts in southeast Missouri. In FY02, Filter Strips were removed because this practice was only used one time. The commission chose to keep Cropland Protective Cover, which was last used in FY00.

Larry Furbeck asked that since Cropland Protective Cover (DSL-8) had not been used, if it should be taken off. Philip Luebbering noted that it had not been used in four years. When asked if it had been used much before 2000, Mr. Redden stated it was used twice in FY00 and then previously used six times since FY93. When asked if there had been any additional practices requested that were not on the list, Mr. Redden stated there were not.

Philip Luebbering made a motion to modify the list of eligible practices for FY05 by removing DSL-8. Larry Furbeck seconded the motion. When asked by the chair, John Aylward, Larry Furbeck, Leon Kreisler, Philip Luebbering, and Elizabeth Brown voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

**4. Consideration for Funding the “Computer-Assisted Terrace Design” Research Proposal**

Ron Redden reviewed the proposal for a proposed feasibility study for the use of a computer-assisted terrace design in Missouri. The proposal originated from a request from the commission.

Five individuals developed the proposal; four from the University of Missouri and the other member was the state NRCS engineer. Clark Gantzer, from the University of Missouri, described the proposal to the commission.

Dr. Gantzer thanked the commission for the opportunity to present the proposal. He explained that a terrace is an earth embankment, a channel, or a combination ridge and channel constructed across a slope purposely to reduce soil erosion. It reduces erosion primarily by shortening the length that water will run down a slope. It can reduce the potential for gully erosion, and also reduce the amount of sheet and rill by impacting the length factor, and improves water quality. Historically terraces were built to follow the land contour because they were simple and economical.

Because not all land slopes are smooth and uniform, often times because the land is irregular and complex, so it becomes difficult to make terraces equally spaced and allows for the necessity of having sharp turns. When terraces are planned in irregular relief areas, terracing is often installed from the top to the bottom.

Current terrace layout procedures are that a layout is often started in October after harvest. The layout would indicate where the terraces would be placed on the land. The decision is made through experience of the contractor, engineer, and/or technician. Normally there is only one layout done for the terraces. The layout will then be installed before the next year's planting. This is the method for a single terrace layout. Often the locations of terraces are not significantly altered once layout begins. This method often limits realignment to relatively short alignments often along the ends of terraces.

Roger Hansen stated that most of the field office employees, regardless of the process, end up with one layout, but in the process they try different layouts to get the best result for the field. Dr. Gantzer stated that he agreed with what Mr. Hansen said,

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however there is one plan that is designed from the process and there are no alternatives other than that final plan.

The proposal being developed would use Global Positioning Systems (GPS), Geographic Information Systems, the web, and powerful desktop computers to allow farmers to consider several terrace layouts options instead of one. The combination of these tools into a terrace layout would help the farmer realize the strengths and weaknesses of a layout in terms of field efficiency, soil type, size of equipment, soil erosion, economy, and farmability. The goal of the proposal would use computers to do complicated math, “ask what if” questions for different layouts, and estimate the economic value of increasing field efficiencies.

The object is to develop a system for computer-assisted terrace design, and to evaluate the feasibility and benefits of the system. Dr. Gantzer stated they propose to develop a process for “Computer-Assisted Terrace Design,” which would use topographic information which would be collected first, then topographic maps would be constructed of the site. Next, topographic data would be used as input to a program to develop and study alternative terrace layouts, then the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation 2 (RUSLE) soil erosion prediction program would be used to evaluate the terrace designs. Finally, the design would be validated with the Missouri Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Missouri Terrace/Diversion Design Program. With the topographic data, it will help to develop layouts in a more efficient manner.

Information on various terrace layouts would be presented to the farmer, the contractor, and NRCS for selection of the most suitable design. It is believed that the proposal would benefit NRCS, Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), the commission, engineers, and landowners.

When asked about the mid-level GPS, Dr. Gantzer stated the design would be done in the field using the standard methods. The precision of the GPS would not be of sufficient resolution to do the design, but would be sufficient to do the layout. When asked what criteria would be used to approve a layout and which would be the one funded if there was a series of layouts available, Dr. Gantzer stated that if there was a series, the one selected would be designed



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to be a certified terrace design. He pointed out that the initial terrace followed the contour of the land, but because of complex land, in some cases the terraces became irregular in shape, and large point rows. Even though they function, the farmability will go down. In response to a concern about the accuracy of the alternatives, Dr. Gantzer stated he had been in contact with the manufacturer of GPS, and the type that is being referred to is a kind-a-matic GPS, with a resolution four times less precise. With that information, Dr. Gantzer suggested one would still have a good basis for developing layouts. When asked how much time the proposal would cut from normal layout time, Dr. Grantzer stated that on a 40-acre field, it could get done in a day or less with one person. When asked about the price for the mid-range GPS, Dr. Gantzer quoted \$8,000. Roger Hansen said his concern with the proposal was if he could duplicate it across the state due to potential cost. Larry Furbeck stated the commission needed to investigate options on an area basis to develop a statewide process utilizing technology that is available. Sarah Fast reminded the commission that they have had different types of research, and this could be looked at as pure research without having to implement it. When asked what the Missouri design was, Dr. Gantzer stated that NRCS has a program that helps develop the certified design that is put on the land. When asked if there were other research proposals going on, Ms. Fast stated there was talk with Food & Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI) about economic research, but the terrace proposal was the only one at this time, because the commission had it as a priority. When asked if there was money not committed, Dean Martin stated there was space in the budget to fund research. When asked at the cost of the proposal, Mr. Martin stated he had not seen the cost for it. Ms. Fast stated that with "E" the commission could go over the research appropriation, and could fund the proposal if the commission wished to do so. Milt Barr informed the commission that each year approximately \$160,000 is budgeted for research.

Larry Furbeck made a motion to accept the proposal. John Aylward seconded the motion. When polled, John Aylward, Larry Furbeck, Leon Kreisler, Philip Luebbering, and Elizabeth Brown voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

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### b. SALT

#### 1. Review of FY04 SALT Expenses

Ken Struempf presented a review of the FY04 SALT expenses. The total number of claims funded in FY04 was 1,500.

The total AgNPS SALT cost-share for FY04 was \$3,400,000. Of that amount, the costs per practice were \$491,508.65 for pest management, and \$409,299.60 for nutrient management, for a total of approximately \$890,000. About \$200,000 was spent on buffers in FY04, which is a positive for water quality. On waste management systems \$90,000 was used. Initially when the AgNPS SALT Program was established, it was believed that there would be a greater amount used for waste management.

For AgNPS SALT regular cost-share the total costs for ponds were \$538,441.10, \$549,019.82 for terraces with tile, and \$256,812.92 for terrace systems without tile. These were the primary use of the funds for regular cost share type practices.

Mr. Struempf reported that there have been six calls for project applications, and the commission is currently in the seventh. The first call was approved in 1997, as a pilot call. The projects were funded as they were submitted at 90 percent, and there were no restrictions on maximums for personnel. In FY04, there were nine projects still active from the first call and the total spent was \$1,910,776.20 for an average of \$190,000 per project. Of the \$1,910,776.20, \$1,569,884.71 was used for cost-share and \$332,225.49 for personnel. In the second call, the commission approved half in the fall of 2000 and half in the spring of 2001. This was the first call where the commission limited the budgets to \$750,000, but it did not have a salary limit. Mr. Struempf reported there were still eight active projects from this call, and the average cost per project was \$83,000. Of the \$668,083.75 total expenses for the second call, 61 percent was for cost-share, for an average of \$50,000 per project. For personnel, 37 percent was spent for an average of \$31,000 per project. From the third call, there are still seven active projects. The total spent was \$626,820.38 for an average of \$90,000 per project. Of the total, an average of \$60,000 went for cost-share and \$28,000 for personnel. The fourth call was approved in 2002 by the commission, with a \$750,000 budget limit and salaries limited to an average of \$35,530 over the seven years of the project. A total of \$978,094.30 was spent for expenses in

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FY04. For the 11 active projects, the average was \$88,000 per project. The average for cost-share was \$60,000 and for personnel was \$24,000. The fifth call was in their first year in implementing their AgNPS SALT projects. The total spent was \$804,536.87 for the 12 active projects. The average was \$67,000 per project with \$30,000 for cost-share, and \$19,000 for personnel. The sixth call included planning grant expenses. The total spent for the 26 projects was \$35,168.65 for an average of \$1,300 per project. Most, 83 percent, was spent on personnel to write the plan, researching, and developing the project proposal.

### **2. Maries SWCD – Tabled Request to Purchase a Truck With SALT Funds**

Davin Althoff presented the tabled request from the Maries SWCD to purchase a truck using SALT funds from the Upper Big Maries River AgNPS SALT Project. The request was tabled at the November 4, 2004 commission meeting to allow legal counsel time to research liability issues regarding state-funded district-owned vehicles.

The district proposed to use \$5,560 that remained in their field equipment funds of \$25,000 to purchase the truck. Maries SWCD used the field equipment funds to purchase a no-till drill and a mulcher. According to the district, the truck would allow district staff access to areas of the county not easily reached by district employee owned vehicles. Mr. Althoff stated that in discussion with NRCS, there is currently an NRCS employee with a government vehicle in Maries SWCD four out of five days per week.

It was noted that the remaining \$5,560 might be moved to SALT cost-share if it is not approved to be used for the purchase of a truck.

Harry Bozoian stated he talked to the Office of Administration and through other research, found a low risk for the commission. If the commission allowed the purchase of the vehicle for the benefit of the Maries SWCD to get practices on the ground, there would be relatively low risk. Mr. Bozoian did suggest the commission ask Maries SWCD to provide proof of liability insurance.

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Philip Luebbering made a motion to approve the board's request to purchase a truck using remaining SALT field equipment funds with proof of liability insurance. Larry Furbeck seconded the motion. When asked by the chair, John Aylward, Larry Furbeck, Leon Kreisler, Philip Luebbering, and Elizabeth Brown voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

### E. REQUESTS

#### 1. Land Assistance

##### a. Cost-Share

#### 1. **Butler SWCD – Change DWP-1 Minimum Topwidth Cost-Share Eligibility From 6 Feet to 12 Feet**

Ron Redden presented a request from Butler SWCD asking the commission to consider increasing eligible cost on the minimum topwidth on drop pipe structures from six feet to 12 feet.

Commission policy states that, "Cost-Share can only be paid upon the actual cost of the minimum and necessary components needed to install the practice in accordance with NRCS Standards and Specifications."

The rules state, "Should receipts include components which were not needed on the approved practice, the bill shall be adjusted to reflect the actual cost of minimum and necessary components."

Mr. Redden gave a brief background in regard to the commission's current rule and policy. Drop pipe structures that are cost-shared on are constructed to prevent gully erosion and not existing gully erosion. The commission has provided an exception to the soil loss rule that allows cost-share to be provided for this practice. The exception states, "For eligible practices to prevent gully erosion when needed to complete a water disposal system."

There are two different types of situations in southeast Missouri regarding topwidths on drop pipe structures. One is a situation in which drainage districts require a top width of 12 feet or more. The commission currently authorized state cost-share for a top width up to 12 feet even if less is required to meet the minimum necessary requirement, just as long as 12 or more feet is required by the drainage district.

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In the letter, the board requested a minimum 12-foot top width on all drop structures based on three issues. First, the board states there are safety concerns. Second, the board indicates that if a tool bar is on the rear of a tractor, it increases the opportunity for the tractor to turn over. Finally, with the increased size of farm equipment, the board states that most landowners have a ten-foot brush cutter and there is potential of creating an erosion problem by running a cutter in the dirt on a six-foot top. The board indicated the average size of the top of levees landowners are building is 14 feet, so even if the commission increased the eligibility to 12 feet, the landowner would still be contributing to the additional cost.

Bruce Beck from Butler SWCD stated this was a practice that was past due because six foot tops are obsolete. Butler County raises the most rice in the state and the fields are large. Their number one land improvement practice is grading and the number one cost-share practice is drop pipes. Mr. Beck stated farmers are paying the difference after cost-share on the six-foot tops to close to \$500.00 to create a 12-foot top. Under EQIP, the county has a minimum ten-foot top. Another advantage of having a 12-foot top would not only be for safety, but for the longevity of the practice.

Leon Kreisler made a motion to change policy, based on the safety concerns and the potential of creating an erosion problem by using a brush cutter larger than the topwidth as expressed in the board's letter, to increase the eligibility for cost-share to 12-foot even, when a lesser length meets the minimum and necessary amount specified in the NRCS Standards. John Aylward seconded the motion.

When asked what the 12-foot top was based on, Mr. Beck stated the design practice offered 10-or 12-foot, but a lot of farmers do 14-feet. Butler County chose 12. When asked if they saw any gain in going from ten to 12, and what the cost was to increase to 12, Mr. Beck stated he was not aware.

When asked by the chair, John Aylward, Larry Furbeck, Leon Kreisler, Philip Luebbering, and Elizabeth Brown voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

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### b. SALT

#### 1. Miller SWCD - Request for Approval of a New Practice - N316 Incinerator

April Brandt presented a request from Miller SWCD for an incinerator to be approved as an eligible practice in the AgNPS SALT Program.

This is an approved practice through EQIP following the N316 Animal Mortality Facility Standards and Specifications. This practice may be applied as part of a conservation management system that helps decrease pollution of surface and groundwater, and helps decrease the spread of disease from dead animals.

Ms. Brandt stated that Miller County was doing some incinerators through EQIP. A normal incinerator for poultry would have about a 400-pound capacity. One recommendation would be to put the incinerator under roof to keep the moisture off the unit, which would increase the life of the unit. According to Miller County, the average cost for an incinerator for poultry would be approximately \$6,000, which would result in SALT cost-share covering \$4,500.00.

Some benefits would be flexibility for the producer to meet the needs of the operation, less volume for storage, and ashes could be land applied more timely.

It was noted that according to NRCS Standards and Specifications, agricultural incinerators do not require a MDNR construction or operating permit when designed, constructed, and operated in an efficient manner as recommended by University Outreach and Extension for the purpose of incinerating dead animals. This exemption only allows noncommercial incineration of dead animals from a farm or ranch enterprise. Incineration of any other waste materials generated on the operation disqualifies the incinerator from exemption. The minimum incineration capacity would be based on the average daily weight of animal mortality and death loss of the largest animals on the site.

Ms. Brandt pointed out that if the commission added this practice to the list of eligible practices for the AgNPS SALT Program, then it would be important to clearly state the purpose is to address animal mortality only, and not any other type of waste generated

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by the operation. Also, it should be made clear that incinerators would be designed based on the minimum and necessary needed, and not intended for disposal of large-scale death losses on the farm.

John Aylward made a motion to approve the request to add incinerators to the list of eligible practices for the AgNPS SALT Program, and direct staff to develop program policy for the N316 incinerator practice and bring it back to the commission for final approval. Larry Furbeck seconded the motion. When asked by the chair, John Aylward, Larry Furbeck, Leon Kreisler, Philip Luebbering, and Elizabeth Brown voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

### **2. Wright SWCD - Request to Cost-Share on Feed and Waste Management Structures for Beef Cows Under the N312 Waste Management System Practice**

April Brandt presented a request from the Wright SWCD to consider cost-share on feed and waste management structures for beef operations under the N312 Waste Management System practice.

During a review of the Whetstone Creek Watershed, staff was told about some innovative feed and waste management structures completed as N312 with SALT cost-share funds.

According to a letter from the district, these types of structures are also funded through EQIP for 50 percent cost-share. However, that funding has not been adequate to meet the requests received. The commission was provided a copy of a basic design for this type of system. Next the commission was shown actual pictures of a completed system for a dairy operation. The dairy operation using this type of structure was able to feed supplemental hay year round. Also according to the letter, these structures are being used to address animal waste concerns associated with dairy and beef production. This type of structure would also address nutrient runoff and erosion problems associated with confined feed of dairy cattle.

According to the district, many beef producers feed hay and supplement to cattle in areas near creeks and streams where they

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are protected from wind and have access to water. Because of this, manure is concentrated near a water source and not spread out evenly over fields. This also results in damage to forage quality and sedimentation in the stream. The district believes this type of structure would provide water quality protection and could complement a planned grazing system.

Wright County has completed three feed and waste management structures with SALT funds to date; one for a dairy operation, and two for beef operations. The structure for the dairy operation was designed to feed supplemental hay only in a pasture situation and is utilized year round. The average actual cost for the three structures was \$30,822.93, and the average SALT cost-share was \$22,058.39.

Some concerns were if there would be enough funding available to do this type of structure for everyone wanting them and the fact that the program has paid for storage area and not feeding areas in the past. There is concern that a case could be made by poultry and swine operations to provide cost-share for feeding areas also.

Dan Divine from Wright County, stated this would put two NRCS practices together; one the program has been supportive of, and the other is the planned grazing system. During the year, there are four times when forage resources are in danger. One is during heavy winter-feeding, second is when waiting on green grass to develop, next is the summer drought, and the last is when you put nitrogen on in the fall and waiting for fall growth. The proposed practice came from North Carolina, from an EPA 319 project. The purpose is to move livestock away from drainageways in order to stop manure and sediment from entering waterways. Wright County believes this is a tool to enhance a grazing system. Mr. Divine stated this would not be for everyone, because not all-grazing systems are the same. According to the district, a planned grazing system would be required to be eligible for this practice and there would have to be access to the pasture from the feeding area.

When asked if this would be brought in with a SALT proposal, Mr. Divine stated that it would. When asked how the district would handle multiple requests, Mr. Divine stated that initially, the demand would not be that great. When asked what the number of



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systems they were looking at doing, Mr. Divine stated there were eight total animal waste practices in the initial proposal. When asked what the capacity of the \$30,000 structure was, Ms. Brandt stated two of the systems served 112 cows and the other served 80 cows. Ms. Brandt pointed out that Wright County was looking at specifically tying this to a grazing system. Roger Hansen stated they were doing some similar things with EQIP funds.

After discussion on appropriate wording, Philip Luebbering made a motion to have staff do practice development, using EQIP as a model, and show the various costs with the various parts.

Leon Kreisler seconded the motion. When asked by the chair, John Aylward, Larry Furbeck, Leon Kreisler, Philip Luebbering, and Elizabeth Brown voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Brandt asked if a commissioner would want to be involved with policy development. Mr. Kreisler stated he would be glad to assist.

### **2. District Assistance**

#### **a. Supervisor Appointments**

##### **1. Lewis SWCD**

Bill Wilson presented a request from the Lewis SWCD to appoint David McCutchan to fill the unexpired term of James Geisendorfer. Mr. Geisendorfer resigned at the August 19, 2004 board meeting. Mr. Wilson stated this resignation is different due to the fact that Mr. Geisendorfer did not wish to submit a letter of resignation. According to legal counsel, since Mr. Geisendorfer formally resigned in a board meeting, and it was recorded in the board minutes, the resignation would be acceptable.

John Aylward made a motion to approve the board's request. Philip Luebbering seconded the motion. When asked by the chair, John Aylward, Larry Furbeck, Leon Kreisler, Philip Luebbering, and Elizabeth Brown voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

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### **F. FOLLOW-UP**

#### **1. Follow-up of Commission Operating Policies**

Sarah Fast presented a follow-up on the operating policies for the commission. At the November 4, 2004 meeting, the commission was provided a draft copy of the operating policies. At that time, the commission asked to wait until more commissioners were present. The policies were put together by the commissioners core workgroup of the various DNR commissions. It asked that specifics for the Soil and Water Districts Commission be completed. Ms. Fast stated she had worked with the chair of the Soil and Water Districts Commission on the policies. The one question that the commission did not have policy on was the number of times a commissioner could be absent before they would be considered resigned. Ms. Fast pointed out that it would be the Governor that would replace any commissioner. Once that number of absences was reached, a request would be sent to the Governor for a replacement.

When asked if illness was a valid excuse, Ms. Fast stated that illness should be a valid excuse, and suggested the commission might want to add a statement that said that. Another option might be to eliminate that sentence in the policy. When asked how many meetings the commission has a year, Ms. Fast stated approximately eight. It was the consensus of the commission to indicate that with four consecutive absences, except in the case of illness, a commissioner shall be deemed to have resigned. The effective date was November 29, 2004.

Larry Furbeck made a motion to accept the draft of the operating policies. Philip Luebbering seconded the motion. When asked by the chair, John Aylward, Larry Furbeck, Leon Kreisler, Philip Luebbering, and Elizabeth Brown voted in favor of the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

### **G. REPORTS**

#### **1. Staff**

Sarah Fast stated the program has lost a staff member, John Forsyth the coordinator from Macon. Mr. Forsyth was moving to Iowa to go back to private industry. That vacancy will have to be filled.

### **H. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS**

The date of the next commission meeting was set for Tuesday, January 25, 2005, beginning at 8:30 at DNR Conference Center in the Bennett Springs/Roaring River room in Jefferson City, Missouri. The February meeting was tentatively scheduled for Thursday, February 17, 2005, at the DNR Conference Center in Jefferson City, Missouri.

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The March meeting was tentatively scheduled for Thursday, March 17, 2005 at the Lincoln Farm in Jefferson City, Missouri.

When asked if there would be a meeting or tour at the new Lewis and Clark State Office building, Ms. Fast stated it could be arranged after the program moves.

**I. ADJOURNMENT**

Leon Kreisler moved the meeting be adjourned. John Aylward seconded the motion. Motion approved by consensus at 12:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah E. Fast, Director  
Soil and Water Conservation Program

Approved by:

Elizabeth Brown, Chairman  
Missouri Soil & Water Districts Commission

/tm